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Line Breaks in America: the Odds and Ends of Poetry

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Poetry and Protest: an interview with Mary Kate Azcuy

Clíona Ní Ríordáin and Hélène Quanquin

- 1 Mary Kate Azcuy is a poet and an academic. She teaches at Monmouth University where she is Associate Professor of English and director of the Graduate Program. Her poetry has appeared in the *Mayo Review*, the *Exquisite Corpse*, and *To This Broken Shore*. Her creative non-fiction essay about her childhood, “The Red Snowsuit”, was published in the *Kenyon Review* in 2017. She studied creative writing at Princeton, NYU, and Drew University and is the recipient of two AIRIE Fellowships in the Everglades. In 2020 she was a Fulbright scholar at the Russian State University for the Humanities, in Moscow. Her book on Louise Glück’s mythic *Averno* is forthcoming.
- 2 Mary Kate Azcuy participated in a session of the Atelier POEM’s workshop on Poetry and Protest, in June 2018. This is a series of bilingual readings where engaged poets read and discuss their work, thus illuminating the varied interconnections between poetry and the political. The event happens annually and is co-curated by Hélène Quanquin (CECILLE, Université de Lille) and Clíona Ní Ríordáin (PRISMES, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle). The invited poet’s work is translated by graduate students and faculty.
- 3 In this interview, Mary Kate Azcuy examines the relation between her scholarship and her poetry as well as the different themes that underlie her work. It is accompanied by 5 of her poems in English in written and audio form as well as their French translation. They illuminate Mary Kate Azcuy’s poetics and her political preoccupations for the past five years, marking a form of resistance to the pervading discourse of the Trump presidency, rooted in a singular attention to forms of violence, both individual and collective.

Interview

CLÍONA NÍ RÍORDÁIN AND HÉLÈNE QUANQUIN: Can you tell us about your background and how you came to be a writer? What place does poetry occupy in your work? Would you say your poetry is rooted in a specific place?

Mary Kate Azcuy: I was always interested in writing; even as a child, I always created little storybooks, wrote poems, and playacted. I was a very early reader and would sit by the hour reading and creating different voices to act out the dialogue. I always created scenes and stories and conversations with my dolls and toy animals. I wrote poems about my world, nature, objects, and creatures. I was sick a lot as a child because I have a disorder that weakens my immune system, but that gave me a lot of time at home; lots of antibiotics and resting activities were the courses of treatment back then. So, early on, my mother kept me quietly engaged in reading, writing, and art.

By high school, my preferred genre had become poetry. I began publishing poetry in my high school literary magazines. In my first year of high school, I went to boarding school, and I learned several things (not all good) that influenced my life. The good things were that I studied Latin, read, in translation, *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, and the *Bible*, and learned verse forms. This was when I was fourteen and fifteen. I left there and returned to live with my mother and attended my local high school, where I had another English teacher that positively influenced my life. Her name is Kinsa Turnbull. She had us read *The Odyssey* and then selected three students to go to Princeton University to listen to a lecture by Robert Fagles on transliteration and *The Odyssey*. Ms. Turnbull published my first poems. In my final year, she recommended me for the Humanities Seminar, where we read the “great books.” My personal life at the time was a bit in shambles, and her mentorship was where I hung on to my love

of learning, reading, the classics, and being a poet. Writing has been a significant tool in my recovery from difficulties in life.

When I was an undergraduate, I studied Business and English. I studied with the poet Thomas Reiter and loved his American literature and creative writing courses. I also published in the college literary magazine. After my undergraduate degree, I moved to NYC and worked in the fashion industry. I was aesthetically engrossed in the visual culture, but I wanted creative writing as a focal point in my life. I returned to poetry as a visiting student at Princeton University's creative writing program (where I studied with James Richardson and J.D. McClatchy). I then went to NYU for my Master's degree and began publishing my poetry. I studied creative writing and literature with great scholars and writers like Allen Ginsberg, Lenora Champagne, Ralph Black, Lowell Swotzell, and Sharon Friedman. My thesis included a scholarly essay on Eugene O'Neill and my one-act play, *The Storytellers*. Later, my doctoral program at Drew University also involved both literature and creative writing. I wrote my dissertation, which was awarded distinction, on Louise Glück and Mary Oliver under the writers and scholars Virginia Burke Phelan and Laura Winters, who also oversaw my poetry collection, *Blue Feather*—that was in 2003. My work on Louise Glück continued, and in 2006 she published *Averno*, which became a focal point of my career as a scholar.

I was hired as a professor at Monmouth University with a teaching focus on twentieth- and twenty-first-century American Literature. I also teach critical and literary theory and creative writing. In 2019, I became the director of our MA programs in literature, rhetoric & writing, and creative writing. I teach in our MFA program in creative writing, and I am on the faculty of the programs in Gender and Intersectionality Studies. In 2020, I won a Fulbright Scholar's Award and lectured in Moscow, Russia.

Being away from home, alone in Russia, in winter, gave me a lot of time, indoors, without distractions, to work on my creative writing. I get most of my initial writing for a poem or creative essay accomplished when traveling or away from home. I always carry a journal with me and hand write my poems and ideas. I have a box of journals, and when I get downtime, I transcribe them, and begin to edit. Poetry is an essential part of my life. As I mentioned, I was always a voracious reader. It's a bit of an obsession, in that if I like an author, I frequently will read everything they've written. I did this as a child on weekends and in my free time in summer, where I would sit in the library aisles and just read books. My mother was an educator, so she was an expert at educating me about literature. She was of Irish and Alsatian heritage. She spoke some French and read Latin, so she was keen on me reading French and Latin, as well. We were fortunate to have access to excellent libraries, and we had books in our house.

In my childhood, many of those books were poetry, fables, myths, fairy tales (Perrault, Grimms, Andersen), the stories of the saints and martyrs, *Mother Goose*, *A Children's Garden of Verses*, Beatrix Potter books, and Bible stories in verse. My mother would sing little French songs to me, and I loved the melodies and cadence of those songs. In retrospect, the stories we engaged with were rather violent and introduced children to violent realities and possibilities in the world. I later loved eclectic books by Roald Dahl, Edward Gorey, and Charles Addams, which supported my continuing

interest in the macabre. I also loved reading the dictionary and encyclopedias. I still love research and words. These texts created great models for me in other writers and poets who greatly influenced the sounds and themes that are a part of my life with poetry, my scholarly writing, and my teaching. The major focus of my scholarship remains Glück's poetry. The focus of my creative writing is poetry and creative non-fiction, lyrical prose.

I love to travel and think that these experiences have influenced my poetry and given my work breadth. My poetry is probably rooted in the details of the places I occupy the most: New Jersey and South Florida. My academic career has given me a foundation of place. My nature is more peripatetic, so my scholarship provides that balance that I really need to fuel my scholarly research and creative writing. I have lived most of my life in New Jersey; my childhood was in New Jersey, Philadelphia, and South Florida, where I continue to visit for about four weeks per year. I also lived in New York, Massachusetts, outside of Chicago, and in the San Francisco Bay area. I am very interested in ideas of space and place in poetry and how that makes creative writing unique to the author's time and place in the world, and the legacy of writing we leave, our trace.

CNR and HQ: How does your teaching of creative writing shape your poetic practice? Does your scholarship inform your poetic practice?

MKA: I enjoy teaching undergraduate and graduate students and working with our graduate students on their MA and MFA theses. The work they engage in is very interesting. They are eager to learn and move forward as writers. My key focus is to teach students new ways to approach literature and writing. I want them to engage with innovative styles and find changes in original forms and models that transformed. I want them to find their unique voices in our present moment in creative writing. As teachers, we are always learning and encountering new formats, techniques, and styles that we share with students. In our study of the craft, we all learn.

My critical and creative voices work together but sound different. I had a reviewer once say that my poetry is in conversation with my critical work, and my critical work has the tone of a poet. I was flattered. I love theory, especially feminist, gender, and queer theory by Judith Butler, Sarah Ahmed, and Jack Halberstam.

CNR and HQ: You are a Louise Glück scholar. To what extent does your reading of her work influence your own work as a poet?

MKA: I have been engrossed in Louise Glück's work for most of my career. After such a long period, I am cognizant of not trying to mimic her sound or style. I have a very different poetic voice.

I write about trauma differently than she does. Yet, I must say, her work has given me my scholarly focus, and, of course, having her poetry in my head has influenced my work. Her poetry allows me to engage the topics I love to write about: myth, gender, women, trauma, survivorship, and poetry. I began reading Glück's poetry when I was in graduate school, and it gave me what I needed for my academic life from there forward. She has been a literary mentor I only knew from the page. She did come to my university to give a workshop and reading in April 2014. It was a wonderful experience. She is a brilliant and monumental poet.

It's interesting, now that I think about it, how much time one's expert field takes up in their life. Glück's poetry is sometimes an entire symphony and at other times a background melody, but when you consistently stay engaged with one author, the influence has to be enormous. I've had so many people suggest I move away from her work and engage in happier topics. This is a comment toward women, as well. I'm offended by the "be a happy girl" trope. Women have had real lives, challenges, and hardships. I do believe and hope that Glück's Nobel Award will help change the world of poetry for women.

CNR and HQ: Can you name other poets, living or dead, that you're in conversation with?

MKA: I think the poetry we've read and loved leaves a trace in our lives and work. In my early years of writing, I was often told to model my work on poetry by Anne Sexton, Marianne Moore, and Elizabeth Bishop. Richardson changed that by telling me to "read everything," introducing me to "new voices" in poetry, and reminding me to keep what works and move forward from what doesn't work for your taste, style, and your writing. His influence and my time at Princeton were enormously positive in changing my writing style and my career and life's direction.

Then, at NYU, Ginsberg added another dimension, as he had us read a range of work. He was smart, innovative, cool, spiritual, super professional, and a very demanding professor. We read classical literature, epics, great American poets, the Beats, musical lyrics, and he spent a good deal of time reading to us in his sing-song voice. He had Bell's palsy, and his voice would raise pitch occasionally. It was very moving. He was also very influential in showing me how to brave as a writer and human. When I think of the influence his milieu of the counterculture (the Beats and the political folk singers) had in the world, it's incredible. They were willing to risk everything for their beliefs and their art. Ginsberg had us reading the works of great women writers like Patti Smith, Diane di Prima, Denise Levertov, Anne Waldman, Eileen Myles, Susan Howe, and Joan Baez.

At that point in my life, I was also reading Lucille Clifton, Rita Dove, Adrienne Rich, Sharon Olds, Anne Carson, and Audre Lorde. They were essential to my studies. Mary Oliver is an inspiring and often ignored poet in academia. I still use her work in my teaching. I have an affinity for Eavan Boland. Her poetry is intelligent and elegant. As an Irish-American, I connect to her themes of survivorship, the legacy of a marginalized group, and the generational tragedies they suffered.

I like the voices, intelligence, and aesthetics of poets like Natasha Tretheway, Naomi Shihab Nye, Joy Harjo, Ruth Padel, Tracy K. Smith, and Hannah Sullivan. I am drawn to the creativity, cadence, intensity, and innovation of Harryette Mullen, Myung Mi Kim, Natalie Diaz, Carmen Giménez Smith, Susan Wheeler, and Kae Tempest. They are brilliant. There are so many excellent writers that I read and could name!

CNR and HQ: What does it mean to be a woman poet today? Do you think a woman's voice needs amplification in the poetry world?

MKA: Being a woman like the term itself is complicated. The terms woman and poet are complex. I believe poets are solitary writers who need community, and that in itself creates a conundrum. I was a shy and quiet child that went to writing to communicate my private thoughts and ideas. As an adult, my mentors told me I had to reveal myself or the poetry wouldn't work. And, then I became a professor, which requires intensive performance and interactions with people.

I do think poetry needs a diversity of voices, including those of women. For a long time, women poets were limited in topics: the shame of the domestic sphere, madness, sexuality, confession, and such. Now to have Glück, a woman lyric poet, as the Nobel Laureate—I hope this is a game-changer for women.

And, yes, I do think women's voices need to be amplified. When I was a student and new academic, I was warned that the business of poetry was always hierarchical and nepotistic, and that academics and cliques held the door and fiercely guarded their positions. I hope that changes. There is room for everyone. Poetry, like everything, needs to continue becoming more diverse and inclusive. I hope new groups develop and that those groups will be even more inclusive.

CNR and HQ: Do you consider yourself to be a feminist writer?

MKA: I was significantly influenced by my single mother's career as a teacher, social activist, and politician. My mother spent her entire life educating me about being a woman. She was brave and intelligent, and determined that education and work were the way out and up for women.

I consider myself a creative writer and a theorist using an inclusive feminist—gender, queer, intersectional, ecocritical, ecofeminist—lens to view and write about literary works, and write poetry and essays. These are the terms and the limitations of words that are currently available to describe my approach.

Maybe I consider myself a gender and intersectionality writer that advocates for women. Some readers regard my writing as that of an extreme feminist. One reviewer called me a “militant-feminist.” I'd bet that reviewer was not a woman.

I'm not sure in 2021 what the word “feminist” means in a general context, but that is the word I have available. I frame my critical lens in those terms as those are the terms that exist. I certainly want my lens to be one of inclusion and not an exclusion of voices.

CNR and HQ: How do you see the relationship between poetry and politics?

MKA: Interesting that you asked this. I just thought that the work I truly and deeply engage with is political. From Ginsberg to Glück to Jericho Brown, the trajectory of the authors I read is political. I kept a game face as a person for most of my life because I was trained to hide my family's secrets about our abuser. To grow up, become a writer, and have everyone tell you that you are safe to come out with your life story doesn't feel safe. That was clear to me. I was trained to be unreadable, cloak stories in metaphor, and avoided polemics in my creative work. The threat of retaliation, punishment, and harm by my abuser was real for a vulnerable period in my life.

With the mentorship of writers, I was able to find examples of brave voices who told their stories, were social advocates, and voiced truth. Mary Oliver was a survivor of abuse. She wrote about it, but you had to look for it. Later, she discussed her story outright. My book on Louise Glück finds the political in her Demeter and Persephone poetry. She does not come out and discuss an originating trauma or an event. I read her mythic, lyric poetry as voicing a story for women about being silenced and abused and oppressed. She has also been honest about her struggles.

CNR and HQ: Have recent social movements, such as #MeToo and Black Lives Matter, and the Trump presidency changed your inspiration and affected your work?

MKA: Yes, in the Trump period, I felt a moral obligation to be vocal. We are silent or vocal in our witnessing. People want to stay the course and not cause trouble or be targeted. I was raised by this system of dysfunction where a powerful patriarchy rules, and you shut up or face threats of repercussions, violence, death, loss of income, loss of your children. It's horrible to be a victim and to be made a pariah.

I cannot begin to measure the horrendous racism and dangerous rhetoric unleashed in this country and how targeted people felt and continue to feel. Yet, we are still in this period. We've had less than a year of Joe Biden as president. We continue to need activism and truth and balance. One man cannot undo the harm that was unleashed—that still lingers like toxic smoke over the smoldering fire that with more air might reignite.

The pre-2016 election period unleashed dangerous rhetoric that continues into 2021. Because of the fields I work in, being allied with diverse groups, being from a multi-ethnic family, I assume people would be respectful of our differences. But, unfortunately, some people have decided that civility has become optional. I find it all bizarre and very frustrating. These offensive conversations seemed to shut down “teachable moments.” During the first post-Obama campaign period and election, I was reminded of the Milgram studies and follow-ups from the Stanford Prison experiments—that 75% of people will follow or commit evil acts.

The #MeToo movement brought great awareness to an unimaginable situation. I have always supported women in their truths and removing the shame of testimony. In 2017, after the election, I had a creative non-fiction essay, “The Red Snowsuit,” published in *The Kenyon Review*.

Some people asked if I was aligning myself with the movement. The essay had been written and accepted before the movement, so it was a coincidence. I do hope that my essay brought awareness to the subject of abuse against women and children.

The great importance of the #Me Too Movement and all of the activism by survivors and allies helps remind people not to keep secrets, the responsibility of witnesses, and the obligation to support people's testimonies. It is also about human rights and stopping corrupt systems, and educating people about treating each other with dignity and respect.

CNR and HQ: Could you tell us a little about the 5 poems you are going to read for us (“Enter the City Once Ruled By Men,” “Metal & Masks,” “The Nursery and the Graveyard,” “Audubon”)?

MKA: “The Nursery and the Graveyard” came after a severe winter and then a beautiful spring. The seasonal creatures left hibernation or migration and arrived in our garden. It's my favorite time of year, May in particular. I spent a great deal of time watching the world from the window that winter. The deer are always active in our garden, but that spring, I saw a doe give birth, and the fawn started to walk and then run. I would watch her daily, the little life that began in front of me. And, because it is nature, I was reminded that life is delicate and precarious.

I was also horrified by the escalation in violence in the USA at the time. In 2017, after the election and Trump's win, I began to question how to measure the madness that seemed to have been ignited around me. It seemed more 1938 and the looming threat

of a return to horrors and violence against our citizens. I questioned how to live in a country where your community members and leaders had aligned themselves with a ruling party leader whose rhetoric you opposed. I was afraid. I was also thinking of how people remain in places too long. My father-in-law's family fled Cuba because of political atrocities and for being political. In our family and circle, it became a quiet conversation about making sure you have an updated passport. Can you get dual citizenship? We were all quietly looking at the signs and trying not to overreact or underreact.

"Enter the City Once Ruled By Men." I wrote a group of poems about gun violence around the time of "March for Our Lives" in 2018. The shootings at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas School had just occurred, and many of the poems came from that, recurring atrocity in America, mass killings, and the slaughter of children. I am perplexed by the ungoverned use of automatic weapons, and the conversation about the second amendment seems absurd and outdated in the twenty-first century. The loss of lives to gun violence is unmeasurable.

I was so frustrated by the *panem et circenses*, the carnival of bread and circuses, in Washington politics and power brokering. I felt like we were watching such distractions from ancient Rome. The madhouse of politicians being the grotesques that have abandoned morals and goodness for money and maneuvering. It was also a nod at the resurgence of women marching on Washington.

This was around the time of the Christian Holy Week; thus, I was taken by the ironies of leaders claiming to have an allegiance to God and Christianity while peddling hate speech. "A City Once Ruled by Men" has biblical allusions to draw forward the misuse of religion in the name of God's way or the use of dogma to propagandize hate. I included the Latin phrase from Luke 19:41 *Flevit super illam* (as Jesus looks over the city and weeps). Enrique Simonet has an iconic painting of the scene.

I thought this was an appropriate comparison, as the human aspects of politics seem to have left the political center of Washington, DC. Instead, it was Trump, and he reminded me of a circus ringmaster, tinted orange by skin dyes, running the main tent, and distracting us with the sideshows. All distractions and entertainment were available for the paying audience.

"Metal & Masks" was written in 2018. I went through my journals and found a group of poems I'd written in Salzburg, Austria, after visiting the Hohensalzburg fortress. They have a museum of torture devices that is an utterly absurd list of names and devices. Yet, their uses were real and beyond horror. I thought of women and the fifteenth-century text *Malleus Maleficarum*, the official guide on how to torture witches, women, and the use of these devices or double-bind tests that continued in America and during the witch trials. I found women's testimony in our time, about sexual abuses, being used against them to create a circus atmosphere to discredit them via a corrupt theology that included public shaming, torture, and figurative killing.

An obvious note, but this poem is a historical view from a museum installation connected to politicians' disturbing rhetoric in 2018. In 2020, masks for the entire world became a life-saving necessity to prevent the spread of disease. This, of course,

does not connect to the Medieval devices, masks, meanings, and connotations from the Hohensalzburg museum or the poem.

CNR and HQ: What are you working on at the moment? How has the pandemic affected your work?

MKA: Right now, I am polishing my poetry manuscript and editing my monograph on Louise Glück's *Demeter* and *Persephone* poems. I have found working during the pandemic to be oddly time-consuming, exhausting, and productive—in completing projects that I was distracted from prior to the pandemic. As I mentioned earlier, when the pandemic began, I was in Moscow as a Fulbright Scholar lecturing, but I was alone, albeit living in residence at the Russian State University for the Humanities. It was fabulous because I was at this incredible university in the city, but the reality was changing with news of the pandemic spreading, and students were getting sick. The city grew quieter, and we were starting to stay in our apartments more. I was very isolated, but when I'm alone, I write. So, it was a productive time.

Due to the pandemic, Fulbrighters returned to the USA at the end of March, and I continued my research and lectures electronically. I was in lockdown in my house, doing research, producing lectures, and I continued my creative writing, as well. I was working 10 hours a day, 6-7 days a week. It's an intensity that I love, but it's not very balanced or sustainable, long-term.

In July, I returned to my work at Monmouth University and online teaching, meetings, advising, and my usual hectic schedule that moved into fall and winter and the following spring. I love teaching and think Zoom is an excellent platform and is super efficient, but it is intense. The only extra time I found to write came from not leaving the house, not socializing, and not commuting. Besides that, the demands of academia increased, as some people perceived that we needed more electronic contact to make up for the lack of human-form contact. I found that I filled the pandemic period with more work, as it was very difficult and depressing not to see my family, friends, and colleagues. But, again, I'm grateful for the technology that did give us electronic contact.

Naturally, during last year, I was very distracted by the changing world of the pandemic and the political chaos of the election. I was horrified by the continuing rhetoric of hate and the fallout from the Trump years and legacy, and I am disappointed that the USA is still so divided. The ongoing brutalities and violence against targeted individuals and groups in the USA are unacceptable. They need voicing and attention so that we work together to create a peaceful and united country.

In the last year and a half, I have been repeatedly reminded of people and their bravery against hardships and misery. We have seen such enormous losses of lives, jobs, homes, health, and the political chaos has been overwhelming. Yet, people voted and changed the course of history, but the reality remains that the USA is a divided country, and the extremists are not backing down. Joe Biden is a good man, but he is fighting many battles on many fronts.

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Lire / à écouter

ENTER THE CITY ONCE RULED BY MEN

By Mary Kate Azcuy

ENTREZ DANS LA VILLE JADIS GOUVERNÉE PAR LES HOMMES

Sous la direction de Clíona Ní Ríordain

(Opening quote)	(trad. officielle Leconte de Lisle)
And I wish that I were not any part of the fifth generation of men, but had died before it came, or been born afterward. For here now is the age of iron. -- Hesiod, <i>The Work and Days</i>	Oh ! si je ne vivais pas dans cette cinquième génération des hommes ! Si, plutôt, j'étais mort auparavant, ou né après ! En effet, maintenant, c'est l'Âge de fer. -- Hésiode, <i>Les Travaux et les Jours</i>

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Enter the City Once Ruled By Men	Entrez dans la ville jadis gouvernée par les hommes (trad. Tomás Pereira Ginét)

On Palm Sunday Eve, On the Saturday of Flower Week, The day before holy week, The children and adults, Enter the city ruled by men After the snow— To March, to remember life, Children voicing for Children murdered.	La veille du dimanche des Rameaux, le samedi des Pâques fleuries, un jour avant la semaine sainte, les enfants et les adultes, entrent dans la ville gouvernée par les hommes après la neige— pour défilier, pour célébrer la vie, les enfants crient pour donner voix aux enfants assassinés.
<i>Flevit super illam</i>	<i>Flevit super illam</i>
The politicians Hide from sight And travel To warmer climates, Spring getaways; <i>Enter the city</i> <i>Ruled by men.</i> On Palm Sunday Eve, when The braided Fronds, The stray Cherry blossoms, Early blooms Loosened, Petals blow Into the roadways And pathways— The sad spring's Snow-white Coating The children's path.	Les politiques se cachent et partent vers des climats plus doux, des escapades printanières ; <i>entrez dans la ville</i> <i>gouvernée par les hommes.</i> La veille du dimanche des Rameaux, quand les feuilles de palmier tressées, les fleurs des cerisiers errantes, les premières fleurs se défont, les pétales s'éparpillent sur les routes et les sentiers— la tristesse du manteau de neige du printemps, le chemin des enfants.
<i>Enter</i> <i>The city</i> <i>Once ruled</i> <i>By men</i> And March Under the eye, Into the tears Of God.	<i>Entrez</i> <i>dans la ville</i> <i>jadis gouvernée</i> <i>par les hommes</i> et marchez sous le regard, dans les larmes de Dieu.

5

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Metal & Masks	Du métal et des masques (trad. Tomás Pereira Ginét)

I am tearful And feel the twisted Noose of silencing, again. Watching the news, I am lost. In the madness Of corruption, arms Dealers, political Payoffs, campaign Contributions, As the men in office Prefer to turn Metal & masks Into our life's sentence. Die Schandmaske's silence, Modesty tools, speculum's phallic Inserts, the dick's nose, The devil's grin, with Witch's bridal/bridle, Tongue down, hard down, The pierced parts, the horses Bit of twists chains bars The sliced and pinched lips And clit's torn tongue, the Rapist's knife, the iron chair, The pig's snout of the jester And fool's grin that sits me In the Judaswiese, Belts me into The art of metal & masks, The ears of an ass, The devil's wife Led, collared, leashed. The iron maiden day spa, Where men singe and boil And flay and skin and Draw and quarter Us on twitter television media The voice or the mirror, The orange jester, The red's fool, The fool to orange, the Burning poker, The joy of the stick	Pleine de larmes, je sens le nœud coulant du silence, de nouveau. Je regarde les infos, je suis perdue. Dans la folie de la corruption, des marchands d'armes, des récompenses politiques, des contributions aux campagnes électorales, et les hommes au pouvoir qui font le choix du métal et des masques, notre prison à perpétuité. Le silence dans <i>Die Schandmaske</i>, les instruments de pudeur, les intrusions phalliques du spéculum, son nez en forme de bite, le sourire grimaçant du diable, avec la bride-bavarde de la sorcière, la langue repoussée, loin dans la gorge, les parties percées, le mors des chevaux fait de chaînes entortillées entrave les lèvres lacérées et pincées, la langue du clito déchirée, le couteau du violeur, la chaise de fer, le groin du bouffon et le sourire de l'idiote qui m'assoit sur le <i>Judaswiese</i>, qui m'attache dans l'art du métal et des masques, le bonnet d'âne, la femme du diable emmenée, colletée, tenue en laisse. Une cure d'un jour pour les demoiselles de fer, où les hommes nous roussissent et nous cuisent et nous fouettent et nous écorchent et nous éviscèrent et nous écartèlent sur twitter à la télé dans les médias la voix ou le miroir, le bouffon orange, le fou du parti rouge l'idiote qui se met à l'orange, le tisonnier brûlant,
Translated by Mary Kate Azcuy, 2021 The dark twist of The ultimate Old-school medieval devices,	la joie du bâton dans la gorge, le sombre revirement du comble des appareils moyenâgeux et novariénus

6

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The Nursery and the Graveyard	La Crèche et le Cimetière (trad. Juliette Pezairé)

Greenery has returned north, In winter. The birds call out before dawn. The nascent deer eat the Seeds and corn I leave for them, In earthy troughs and piles. Since the redbone hound died, A herd of does sleep hedged in. Some gave birth—the babies— Found food and early death By my home and garden, too: In summer and autumn, We found small spotted deer Dead in the road, bushes, A little pair, couple, siblings, Fawn and small buck, nub-horned— Someone dragged their warm Corpses onto to my lawn: My garden is the nursery And the graveyard. I am weary of the world. I hear the clanking chains that humans Forge and the burnt scars Of flesh for the generations. I see how expendable I am Like the road-burned doe who Leads the herd to the seed piles And moves onto her haunches To hoof the younger while she Keeps count. White tails up, They run from the sounds I do Not hear; often, they run into the road. I understand how people wait Too long, hoping for safety behind the hedge, In the familiar garden; they wait, Afraid of treacherous roads, And instead, watch the embers Of the hearth, as they face the fire. I hear the hunter's quiet click, too.	La verdure a regagné le nord comme chaque hiver. Les oiseaux chantent avant l'aube. Les faons nouveaux-nés mangent les grains et le maïs que je dépose dans les auges terreuses ou par tas. Depuis que le lévrier est mort, un troupeau de biches dort lové là. Certaines ont mis bas – les petits – ont trouvé nourriture et mort prématurée, près de ma maison, mon jardin : en été et en automne, on trouve des petits cerfs tachetés morts sur la route, dans les buissons ; duo, petit couple, frères et sœurs, faon et daguet, aux cornes bosselées – quelqu'un a traîné leurs cadavres encore tièdes sur ma pelouse : mon jardin est à la fois une crèche et un cimetière. Je suis lasse de ce monde. J'entends tinter les chaînes que forgent les hommes, et sur des générations les cicatrices de chair brûlée qui crépitent. Je vois à quel point je suis négligeable, comme la biche épuisée sur la route qui mène son troupeau vers le grain entassé et se cabre pour ramener les plus jeunes, d'un coup de sabot tandis qu'elle recompte. Leurs petites queues blanches relevées, ils courent et fuient des bruits que je n'entends pas ; souvent, droit vers la route. A présent, je comprends ceux qui attendent trop longtemps, sains et saufs derrière la haie d'un jardin familial ; ils attendent, craignent les routes trompeuses, et contemplent plutôt les braises du foyer, debout face au feu. J'entends aussi le déclic discret du fusil.

7

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Audubon	Audubon (trad. Aleksandra Lendzinska)
If I tell you the names and place of things, It makes me responsible for their Existence and demise; my knowingly ignoring Their impending peril. I create them. I destroy them. If I tell you the silhouette of them, The warbler's feathers, the lines and colors, The raptor's directions, the songbird's house — You will hunt them, dissect them, rip out their feathers, Boil their bones, reconstruct them, hanging corpses by wire, Drawing, killing tens of thousands in the name of conservation. The dying bird more beautiful than the living or dead, The trained taxidermist wiring the broken neck and Barely flapping arms—in flight positions. Alligators sprayed with bullets, And your name will be one thing, Jean Rabin. And then it will be another: Audubon.	Si je te donne le nom et la place des choses, ça me rend responsable de leur existence et trépas, ma connaissance ignorant leur péril imminent. Je les crée. Je les détruis. Si je te dis leur silhouette, les plumes de la fauvette, les lignes et les couleurs, les directions du rapace, la maison de l'oiseau chanteur -- tu les chasseras, les disséqueras, les plumeras, feras bouillir leurs os, les reconstruiras, accrochant les cadavres à un câble, dessinant, en tuant des dizaines de milliers au nom de la conservation. L'oiseau mourant plus beau que vivant ou mort, le taxidermiste habile attachant la nuque brisée et les ailes à peine battantes dans des positions de vol. Alligators criblés de balles, et ton nom sera une chose, Jean Rabin. et ensuite une autre : Audubon.